

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15651

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
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SUBJECT: JEWISH DISSIDENTS "SUNDAY SEMINAR"

REF: MOSCOW 13541

1. SUMMARY: MOSCOW DISSIDENTS' "SUNDAY SEMINAR" HAS
BEGUN ITS 1976-77 SEASON. PLANS CONTINUE FOR A SPECIAL
SYMPOSIUM ON JEWISH THEMES IN DECEMBER. SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS
ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO THINK OF A 5TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORA-
TIVE SESSION OF THE SUNDAY SEMINAR IN MARCH 1977. END
SUMMARY.

2. VIKTOR BRAYLOVSKIY, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE SUNDAY
SEMINAR, RECENTLY BROUGHT US UP TO DATE ON SEVERAL ASPECTS
OF THE SUNDAY SEMINAR. ACCORDING TO BRAYLOVSKIY, THE SEMINAR
BEGAN ITS FALL 1976 SEASON ON SEPTEMBER 13. FOUR
SESSIONS SO FAR HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT ANY HARASSMENT FROM
POLICE OR NEIGHBORS. PARTICIPATION IS AS HIGH AS IN PREVIOUS
YEARS, AND THE ORGANIZERS LOOK FORWARD TO A FULL SCHEDULE
OF SEMINARS ON BOTH SCIENTIFIC AND HUMANITARIAN TOPICS.

3. BRAYLOVSKIY ALSO SKETCHED OUT STATUS OF THE SYMPOSIUM
ON JEWISH AFFAIRS (REFTEL). MOST OF THE PAPERS TO BE
DELIVERED BY THE SOVIET PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.
BRAYLOVSKIY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEIR QUALITY WAS UNEVEN,
BUT SAID SOME AT LEAST WERE QUITE WORTHWHILE. TWO PAPERS
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HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM AMONG THE FOREIGNERS INVITED TO ATTEND.

BRAYLOVSKIY FEELS THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GET AT LEAST SEVEN OR EIGHT ADDITIONAL PIECES FROM FOREIGNERS BETWEEN NOW AND THE DATE OF THE SEMINAR.

4. THE ORGANIZERS HAVE INFORMALLY RECEIVED WORD THAT AT LEAST TEN OF THE FOREIGN INVITEES HAVE APPLIED FOR SOVIET VISAS -- OSTENSIBLY FOR TOURISM -- WHICH WOULD PERMIT THEM TO ATTEND THE SYMPOSIUM IN PERSON. NO ONE HAS YET RECEIVED HIS VISA ALTHOUGH, TO THE ORGANIZERS' KNOWLEDGE, NO ONE HAS YET BEEN REFUSED. BRAYLOVSKIY SAID THAT IT WAS THE CONSENSUS AMONG THE SYMPOSIUM'S ORGANIZERS THAT THE FOREIGNERS WOULD NOT, FINALLY, BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND. IT WAS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER OR NOT THE SYMPOSIUM WOULD BE HELD AS SCHEDULED, BUT HE WAS SANGUINE THAT SOME FORM OF SYMPOSIUM WOULD TAKE PLACE.

5. BRAYLOVSKIY ALSO COMMENTED TO US ABOUT SOME VERY TENTATIVE PLANS TO ORGANIZE AN EXTENDED "5TH ANNIVERSARY SESSION" OF THE SUNDAY SEMINAR. THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN MARCH, 1977. ALTHOUGH THE SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS WERE AGREED ON THE DESIRABILITY OF COMMEMORATING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEMINAR, THERE WAS MUCH DISPUTE ABOUT THE SUBJECT FOR THE ANNIVERSARY SESSION. THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT WHETHER IT SHOULD BE ON "HUMANITARIAN" (READ JEWISH) THEMES OR WHETHER IT WOULD BE BETTER, IN VIEW OF THE SUBJECT FOR THE DECEMBER SYMPOSIUM, TO DEVOTE THE SEMINAR TO SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS. BRAYLOVSKIY SAID THAT THE FATE OF THE DECEMBER EFFORT MIGHT WELL DECIDE THE SUBJECT FOR THE MARCH ANNIVERSARY SESSION.

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